



## **Task Force Meeting Synopsis January 28, 2008**

### **Task Force Members Present\*:**

Co-Chair Shirley Lewis, Co-Chair Sam Liccardo, Vice Chair David Pandori, Jackie Adams, Teresa Alvarado, Shiloh Ballard, Michele Beasley, Beverley Bryant, Judy Chirco, Gary Chronert, Yolanda Cruz, Pastor Oscar Dace, Harvey Darnell, Pat Dando, Enrique Fernandez, Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins, Leslee Hamilton, Sam Ho, Dan Hoang, Nancy Ianni, Lisa Jensen, Frank Jesse, Matt Kamkar, Charles Lauer, Karl Lee, Linda LeZotte, Pierluigi Oliverio, Dick Santos, Patricia Sausedo, Erik Schoennauer, Judy Stabile, Neil Struthers, Michael Van Every, and Jim Zito

### **Task Force Members Absent**

Frank Chavez, Dave Fadness and Alofa Talivaa

### **City Staff and Other Public Agencies Present\*:**

Michael Brilliot (PBCE), Justina Chang (PBCE), Roma Dawson (Councilmember Liccardo's office), Anthony Drummond (Councilmember Williams' office), Jessica Garcia-Kohl (Mayor's office), Peter Hamilton (Councilmember Chirco's office), Joseph Horwedel (PBCE), Stan Ketchum (PBCE), Hans Larsen (DOT), Hadasa Lev (PBCE), John Poindexter (PBCE), Laurel Prevetti (PBCE), Junko Vroman (ESD), Kim Walesh (OED), Ru Weerakoon (Mayor's office)

\*As verified by registering attendance on Sign-In Sheets.

### **1. Welcome and review of agenda**

The meeting convened at 6:36 p.m. Co-Chair Shirley Lewis opened the meeting by announcing the resignation of Beverley Bryant and thanking her for her service on the Task Force.

### **2. Review and approval of Minutes from November 13, 2007 meeting**

Correction was requested on the spelling of member Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins' name. Minutes, as revised, were approved unanimously.

### **3. Review of Draft Vision**

Michael Brilliot, Senior Planner, explained the Envision San Jose 2040 Vision graphic included in the packet was intended to be a working document and not a finished product. The graphic was developed using information gathered from the October 2007 Community Visioning Workshop and Task Force discussions and processed to come up with eight major vision themes. The resultant document is a description of what the community would like the City of San Jose become in 2040 with the successful implementation of the General Plan. The Draft Vision will help us develop land use alternatives, and it will be used as one of the criteria to evaluate the alternatives we create. The Vision will set the tone for the entire General Plan document that is developed by the Task Force.

Mr. Brilliot emphasized that the graphic may change over time. It is anticipated that with additional information provided throughout the process of developing the 2040 General Plan, there may be changes to the group's thinking which will need to be reflected in the Vision. Mr. Brilliot encouraged the Task Force members to provide their initial feedback on the document through email to him, and he indicated staff plans to bring the item back to the Task Force in a few months for more in-depth discussion.

### **4. Review of Illustrative Work Program**

Stan Ketchum, Principal Planner, reviewed the Illustrative Work Program with the Task Force members. He indicated the Phase 1 Work Program identifies the major steps that will result in the selection of a preferred alternative. The far left column of the graphic outlines the Existing Conditions of various topics the Task Force will be considering, with the evening's topic being Transportation. The other topics will be addressed in detail in upcoming meetings. With this information, the Task Force will be able to move into Alternatives Identification that looks at existing and future growth. Location and intensity of employment, housing, facilities, and open space, as well as infrastructure, facility and services capacity will need to be addressed. This will be followed by Alternatives Evaluation which will incorporate developing alternative future growth scenarios that will be analyzed and evaluated. This will lead into the Preferred Alternative Selection.

Mr. Ketchum next reviewed the Phase I Work Plan Issues and Products table contained within the packet. The left column lists the key questions that will need to be answered as part of the process to develop the alternatives. The right column shows the work products that will be developed to answer the questions.

## **5. Regional Transportation Context and Current City Transportation Policies and Plans**

Hans Larsen, Deputy Director of the Department of Transportation, provided a presentation on regional transportation. He outlined the development of San Jose from its origins as an agricultural community, to the urban center it is today, and where it will be heading in the next 25-30 years. It is estimated that San Jose will have a population of 1.3 million people by 2030. Mr. Larsen stressed the importance of proactively preparing for the growth of new jobs and housing while minimizing traffic congestion, maximizing economic vitality, enhancing quality of life, protecting neighborhoods and preserving open space. He indicated the most important thing we can do from a transportation perspective is to plan the land uses properly. Balancing jobs and housing will have a beneficial impact on the transportation system. Currently San Jose is auto dependent. A balanced transportation system would allow us to move away from auto dependency. Much has already been done toward a balanced transportation system. Transportation planning strategies need to consider balancing jobs and housing; mixed land uses; development along transit corridors; safety; livability; transportation choices; investments to support economic development; efficient operations; and preservation of the infrastructure conditions.

We have a transit corridor network with neighborhood business districts. As they are intensified, you create more retail opportunities close within the neighborhoods. Planned growth areas include North San Jose, Downtown, Berryessa, BART station, Edenvale and Coyote Valley. There are investments being planned to support the transportation system of this increased population. VTA's 30 years plan identifies \$8.5 million of funding investments.

Mr. Larsen discussed how San Jose is connected within the Bay Area region, citing the commuter rail connections, existing and proposed BART extensions, Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit and the proposed High Speed Rail from Los Angeles. Extending BART the 16 miles into San Jose would provide access to the City to 5 million people. It is projected the extension would carry 100,000 daily riders. Significant local investment is also going into a network of Bus Rapid Transit lines to connect various areas of the County.

Mr. Larsen reviewed the current transportation system status. The area freeways and expressways are 95-98% built out. There are some investments that are being planned for additional interchanges and upgrades to some existing interchanges. Bikeways and trails are the least complete component of the transit system, only being 57% complete. Rapid Transit is 41% complete and Pedestrian Corridors 26% complete. Past investments have been auto oriented; the challenge now is to catch up in the other areas.

Mr. Larsen provided visual simulations of possible future development along a Light Rail Corridor and a Strip Shopping Center incorporating some of the visions for high density infill development. These mixed use plans illustrate how the transportation

environment can transform to become less auto reliant and more pedestrian friendly and attractive.

Mr. Larsen also discussed how Federal, State and Regional policies affect the City of San Jose. Federal and State dollars are funneled to the county and regional levels where most of the planning and decision making is done. VTA leads the effort for Santa Clara County. The City has a General Plan that defines our transportation network for the arterial system, rail transit, bike network and pedestrian corridors. One of the key policies in the General Plan is the Transportation Impact Policy. Mr. Larsen explained that Level of Service (LOS) is defined as the measure of auto congestion. The acceptable Level of Service varies between different types of areas within the City.

Mr. Larsen concluded his presentation by highlighting the strengths of the current transportation system as well as areas for improvement. Strengths include our comprehensive highway system, a good safety record, progressive policies and plans for smart growth, local investments, and an engaged community. Areas where improvements could be made include land use balance, transit use, walking and biking, infrastructure condition and aesthetics.

Mr. Larsen provided points on which the Task Force could focus as they work on the General Plan Update. He recommended the group enhance what has been started and consider new approaches on how to improve areas. On land use, the recommendation is for a mix and balance of land uses and concentrating development along transit corridors. Regarding transportation facilities, the recommendation is for completing the planned local transit network, connecting with regional transit systems, building creek trails and bikeways, improving walkability and designing roads to better fit the surrounding area. Also recommended are pricing mechanisms to manage peak auto demand and improvement of aesthetics. Essential to all of this is policy that would promote sustainable funding for operations and maintenance.

Questions and comments were invited from the Task Force members. Issues raised included the following:

- Question was raised regarding the incremental increase in Level of Service and how that triggers mitigations on a developer. Mr. Larsen explained that projects that add a 1% impact to the congestion level at an intersection are required to provide mitigation for that impact. One of the things the City Council approved in 2005 was a change in the LOS policy regarding infill development that allows for additional congestion at certain intersections without traffic mitigation. Developers are then required to make investments in other improvements to the transportation system such as pedestrian, bicycle or transit.
- Question was raised on the issue of mixed use and whether there are studies showing the amount of housing required in an area to support retail. Laurel Prevetti, PBCE Assistant Director, answered saying there is no specific data but

the plan needs to be flexible so it can respond to what the market conditions are for retail, office and residential. Joe Horwedel, Director of PBCE, added that one of the questions the Task Force will need to answer is what it means for growth scenarios to work. There will be several different ways to accommodate the projected growth. The task will be to determine if the alternatives take into account the values of the community, neighborhoods and City at large. One member suggested case study analysis is critical for the Task Force to know how to develop the land use designations, what kind of height and density, and what amount of commercial development is appropriate.

- Request for clarification of the method of calculating LOS was made. Mr. Larsen explained currently there is a nationally adopted methodology on how to establish LOS. It is an auto oriented methodology. There is some progressive thinking that the measurement should be multi-modal measuring pedestrian, bicycle and transit. It comes down to a values use where you must decide which travel modes you give priority to. He indicated there are parts of the City where we want to give priority to transit and to pedestrians. In order to more effectively integrate transportation and land use, particularly around transit, the theme is to create transit villages where you have a mix of housing, jobs, retail and recreation.
- The issue of traffic impact fees was brought up. Major new development areas, such as North San Jose, require investments in regional infrastructure by the developers. For small development it is difficult for the developer to afford major investments and the cost of making a significant improvement to the regional systems is out of proportion with the impact of the development. Therefore, the smaller projects do not have to pay regional impact fees. It was suggested one of the things the Task Force could look at and encourage is uniformity and consistency across the City so there is not an incentive for numerous small projects.
- Question was raised regarding the portion of the presentation on VTA and the Task Force's purview over VTA's projects. Mr. Larsen indicated VTA was included because they are responsible for the County's major transportation resources. Co-Chair Liccardo, who sits on the VTA Board, indicated that what the Task Force produced as a General Plan would have a huge impact on VTA's funding decisions. If there is insufficient density to support transit, some of the transportation projects will not be built. VTA is paying close attention to what comes out of the Task Force.
- Member Leslee Hamilton indicated that Mineta Transportation Institute at SJSU can supply transit oriented development studies. She asked how the plans presented by Mr. Larsen took into account the aging population. Mr. Larsen indicated that is a demographic issue and a factor that is causing people to look at mixed use communities where seniors can enjoy a good quality of life with

community services and retail nearby that they can walk to easily or have transit services that can take them around.

- The issue of parking was raised. Because it is not a transportation issue, parking was not addressed in the evening's presentation. However, Mr. Larsen acknowledged that when deciding where to locate, retailers consider housing density and parking to accommodate cars. It was suggested that there be further studies on the relationship of congested intersections to the economic sustainability of retail.
- Clarification was requested on the status of the Light Rail extension from Capitol to Eastridge and to Vasona. Mr. Larsen indicated the extensions are funded as part of the 2000 Measure A program. It was envisioned that the Measure would bring in \$6B; with the change in the economy, that has been revised to \$5B. Both Capitol and Vasona line extension projects have completed environmental clearance. The Capitol design work is more than 65% complete. He indicated the work the Task Force does in looking at land plans and enhancing those transit areas and corridors could have a great deal of influence on VTA plans. VTA's policies are going to be based on the existing and envisioned land use in those corridors. Their policy decision will be based on which corridors are going to be most supportive of transit. To the degree that San Jose plans appropriate density in areas where we want to have transit investments, that will help attract those kinds of investments.
- Comment was made that it is important to think about what the hub will look like in downtown San Jose. That will significantly impact all the other plans that are being discussed.
- Question was raised as to how we enforce our values regionally. San Jose has carried an incredible responsibility for the region in housing. Concern was voiced about San Jose taking excessive responsibility for traffic and roads only for our regional neighbors to benefit. Mr. Larsen indicated the Metropolitan Transportation Commission oversees the 9 bay area counties and San Jose does have representation there. MTC is looking at rewarding communities that are doing the right kind of planning both with affordable housing and high density development around transit corridors. They are planning to reward jurisdictions that are doing responsible planning with transportation investments.
- Question was raised about the bicycle lane system only being 60% complete and what is preventing more lanes from being built. Mr. Larsen responded it is a matter of financial resources going into development them. Another constraint is a lack of space on the streets to fit in bike lanes. Trails have gotten a big priority as part of the Green Vision for San Jose, but it runs more than \$1M per mile to build trails. One of the opportunities of the General Plan Update will be looking at furthering our effort to build an on street bikeway network.

- The issue was raised that the new Transportation Impact Policy allows some intersections to become congested in order to attain other goals. Question was asked of what these other goals are, if there is any priority on them, and if any follow up has been done to see if an intersection that is protected has actually helped meet the intended goal. Mr. Larsen indicated some projects have been approved, but not enough experience has occurred to evaluate the effectiveness of the new policy.

## **6. Public Comment**

- Relating to the Work Plan, recommendation was made that the Task Force identify its priorities prior to looking at alternatives. Additionally, it was recommended that there be a methodology whereby innovation can take place both in terms of policy and physical surroundings.
- Support was voiced for the proposed Bullet Train. It was suggested that walking distances surrounding transit origin and destination be considered. Recommendation was made that alternative fuels be used for bus transportation.
- Concern was voiced that historic preservation is not included in the Vision. Additionally, recommendation was made that shopping and jobs be located around Light Rail so expanded transit service does not result in making it easier for people to spend their money in other cities.
- Request was made to consider how to prioritize the high priced transportation projects in terms of appealing to the tax payers who are going to have to pay some of the bond money. As well, it was recommended to have studies that provide data reflecting who rides transit and what their needs are. The Task Force was asked to be mindful of how the maintenance of these new projects will be accomplished.
- It was noted that VTA appears to be an integral part of the decision process, but VTA's future financial viability and management, as demonstrated in the past, is questionable. It was also noted that there are various dollar amounts being assigned for the current BART proposal. Request was made that the Task Force consider the issue of operating cost. As well, the Task Force must determine if the City of San Jose has the money for a comprehensive transit system in our County as well as to fund BART.
- Concern for health issues and facilities was reiterated as an area of concern. Additionally, it was recommended that more creative funding options be explored and that the group assure that mixed use options really work.

- Concern was raised regarding the preservation of wildlife corridors and the relationship of the General Plan Update to the Coyote Valley Specific Plan.
- It was voiced that VTA needs to service the community, not just business. Consideration must be given to people trying to access health and educational needs.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Next Task Force Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 25, 2008, at 6:30 p.m.